

INTRODUCTION

Shah with an ultimatum. Reluctantly Shah Mozaffar ed-Din granted a constitution. Thus, at least formally, a door was opened for the introduction of parliamentary democracy. The British were generally identified with this progressive movement. In the ensuing few years Mozaffar's successor (backed by Russia) tried to destroy the Constitution and restore the old order, but the Democrats, aided by the powerful Bakhtiyari tribe, managed to defend it. Thus the Constitution was saved. But unfortunately for the British, their link with the progressive forces was lost. The Democrats now turned against Great Britain and allied themselves with the new power emerging in the Middle East, Imperial Germany. This shift in friendship was due to the disillusionment of Iranian liberals following the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. The latter was a result of the growing menace of Germany to both Russia and Britain who, to ward it off, decided to compose their differences in Asia. The agreement provided for the division of Iran into Russian and British spheres of influence and, naturally, provoked indignation among the Iranians. From the Russians' point of view the agreement was a distinct advantage as it gave them control of a large area in Iran and brought them closer to India and the Persian Gulf. Consequently their influence in Teheran assumed more and more the proportions of a protectorate. An Iranian attempt to bring order into Iranian finances by hiring an American expert, Dr. Morgan Shuster, as adviser, failed miserably owing to ruthless Russian opposition. Shuster had to leave the country and, bitter about the failure of his mission, vividly described the prevailing conditions in his book entitled

*The
of Persia.*

Strangling

The outbreak of war in 1914 found the British and the Russians in agreement to prevent German penetration toward the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf. Iran remained officially neutral but emotionally pro-German. This neutrality was soon violated by both warring coalitions, so that a sector of the eastern front actually ran through Iranian territory. At the time when this study begins, in the winter of 1917-1918, the Russian front south of the Caucasus was in a state of disintegration due to the Bolshevik Revolution. The new regime in Moscow, proclaiming a radical change in foreign policy, was watched with mixed feelings by Russia's oriental neighbors. To

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